



Animal Health Considerations Before, During and After the Fair



The recent undetected introduction and rapid spread of foot and mouth disease in the United Kingdom highlights the importance of the integration of effective biosecurity practices in every livestock operation within the US. Showing and exhibiting animals presents a risk for the spread of foreign or domestic infectious disease. Infectious diseases such as respiratory disease, contagious mastitis and bovine viral diarrhea, can present signs within a relatively short time frame, whereas Johne's disease may not show signs for years after exposure. Taking the precautions listed below before, during and after fairs can help decrease the exposure to infectious disease.

Prior to taking animals to a fair or show:

- ★ Work with your veterinarian to establish a herd wide vaccination program. Ensure that all fair animals are vaccinated according to requirements.
- ★ Do not bring any visibly sick or unthrifty animals to a fair or show.
- ★ Complete tests as required by show, county or state fair regulations. Provide appropriate paperwork.
- ★ Obtain a properly completed Certificate of Veterinary Examination from your veterinarian for each species including individual tamperproof identification for each animal to be exhibited.
- ★ Test for bovine viral diarrhea (BVD) and BVD-PI status. Work with your veterinarian to determine testing protocol.
- ★ Using a milk sample, determine if the milking animal has contagious mastitis organisms, including *Staphylococcus aureus*, *Strep ag* or *Mycoplasma*.
- ★ Minimize stress prior to the fair by providing a clean, dry and comfortable environment, plenty of water and offer the same feeds that will be taken to the fair.
- ★ Transport to fair and shows in clean trailers. Do not transport other exhibitor's animals in the same trailer. Avoid the use of commercial trailers.

During the fair:

- ★ Provide adequate bedding and plenty of air movement (fans) to keep animals comfortable.
- ★ Make sure there is always water available and that the animals get the same feed as home.
- ★ Keep younger animals separated from older animals, even if they are from the same farm.
- ★ Do not allow nose-to-nose contact with animals from other farms or other animal species. Avoid contact with manure from other animals. This means keeping wheelbarrow tires, pitch forks and *especially feeding equipment* clean and free of manure.
- ★ Do not share equipment which might get contaminated with blood, manure, saliva, or urine because these can transmit diseases such as leukosis, BVD, Johne's or Salmonella. Exhibitors should use separate water tubs for their animals.
- ★ For milking animals it is best to use your own claw in common milking parlors. If that is not possible, bring a milking unit from the farm. Do not let others use your milking unit.
- ★ Encourage public to touch animals in appropriate places, such as along the back.
- ★ Present a good image to the public through proper personal hygiene.

After the fair:

- ★ When transporting animals to home farm have designated areas to unload animals away from home herd.
- ★ *House show animals in a separate facility from the rest of the herd for 3 – 4 weeks upon return.* Use separate equipment for returning animals. Work routine should be modified so that returning animals are attended to *last*. Monitor animals for signs of disease, such as fever, diarrhea, skin abnormalities, heel warts, mastitis or abortions.
- ★ Minimize stress by making sure they are comfortable, well fed and watered. This will give them the best chance to fight off any infection picked up at the fair.
- ★ Ensure that the home herd is well vaccinated prior to any animals attending shows or fairs. Should a returning animal bring home a disease there will be less chance of a disease outbreak.



For more information about biosecurity and infectious diseases contact the New York State Cattle Health Assurance Program at 607-255-8202 or <http://nyschap.vet.cornell.edu>.